

Portland Clean Energy Fund Committee

MEMO: Summary of Public Comments on Draft PCEF Guiding Principles

To: Portland Clean Energy Fund Committee
From: PCEF Staff
Subject: Draft guiding principles – public input report, PCEF Committee Meeting #12
Date: April 9, 2020

Purpose of the memo

This memo summarizes public comments received during the Draft PCEF Guiding Principles public comment period (March 3 through April 5, 2020) and outlines staff recommendations for further discussion by the PCEF Committee in order to approve a final set of guiding principles. Due to COVID-19 related impacts, the public comment period was extended by two weeks.

The primary audience for this memo is the PCEF Committee. The Committee and City of Portland value public participation and this memo offers additional transparency for the many people and organizations who contributed to shaping the PCEF program.

What are the PCEF Draft Guiding Principles?

These principles encompass a set of common values to guide the design and implementation of the PCEF program. They were created with the PCEF Committee and staff between January and February 2020. The PCEF Committee and staff anticipate checking future decisions against these guiding principles to ensure they align with the vision of the Committee and community.

How was input collected?

PCEF staff collected public comments via online survey and email. Members of the public were also offered the options of leaving a verbal comment via phone or filling out a paper survey, which was available in Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese, but these methods were not utilized.

Following guidance from public health officials on COVID-19 and considering the impacts of this public health crisis, the public comment period was extended by two weeks to April 5th. Additionally, two in-person events to solicit public comment on the draft guiding principles were canceled. In place of the events, one webinar was held on April 2nd to provide information to support and encourage comment on the draft guiding principles.

Staff reviewed each comment and recommended areas for Committee discussion. Some comments resulted in recommendations for further discussion and others did not based on the relevancy, alignment with the program's purpose, and/or level of support for each comment. PCEF Committee members are encouraged to consider comments and make a proposal to modify and approve the guiding principles. Final guiding principles are expected to inform all parts of the PCEF program.

This memo is organized into the following categories:

- Recommended areas of discussion
- Summary of public comments: online survey results and emails
- Who we heard from

Recommended areas of discussion

Guiding Principle	Topics recommended for discussion
<p>Justice-driven. Promote systems change that addresses historic and current discrimination. Center all disadvantaged and marginalized groups – particularly Black and indigenous people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the rationale for Black and indigenous focus? • How is indigenous being defined? • Should additional communities be named (for example, calling out BIPOC, women of color, immigrants, those experiences socioeconomic disparities)? • Language changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is “addressing historic and current discrimination” better defined or worded as a path to resolving or having restorative justice? ○ Changing “center” to “focus on”
<p>Accountable. Implement a transparent funding and oversight process that promotes continuous learning and improvement. Demonstrate achievement of equitable social, economic, and environmental benefit. Remain accountable to target beneficiaries, grantees, and all Portlanders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Promotes” continuous learning and improvement to stronger language ensuring it is built into the process ○ Link “continuous learning and improvement” to the second sentence as it speaks more to the project versus fiscal oversight implied in the first sentence. ○ Consider adding “proactive avoidance of conflicts of interest” to the first sentence. • Who decides what success is and how?
<p>Community-powered. Trust community knowledge, experience, innovation, and leadership. Honor and build on existing work and partnerships. Engage with and fund in community-driven approaches that acknowledge and enhance community power to create meaningful change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can “Honor and building on existing work and partnerships” be better linked with intention of finding new partnerships and community partners • Should intent for capacity building be stated in this principle? • Can this statement be clearer: “Engage with and fund in community-driven approaches”?
<p>Focused on local co-benefits. Invest in people, places, and processes that build climate resilience and community wealth, foster healthy communities, and support regenerative systems. Avoid and mitigate displacement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are “co-benefits” defined? • Do we need to make a stronger link to how this relates to displacement? • Should language be added around living wages, promotion of community-based apprenticeship programs, union labor, and labor owned by people of color?

Additional suggestions to modify/add to guiding principles:

- Include explicit language around:
 - Climate impact including quantifiably reducing CO2 or goal of reducing carbon emissions
 - Leveraging other resources to achieve maximum impact
- Recognize additional beneficiaries of PCEF such as low-income people and those in jails and prisons
- Recognize how PCEF can impact housing, transportation, and other sectors due to ripple effects of the intersections the program can impact
- Make clear that all principles have an intention to center the most marginalized

Summary of public comments

Through the five-week comment period, we received 130 responses to the online survey and 82 emails regarding the draft guiding principles. Information from the online survey excluding identifiable information and all email messages excluding email addresses and physical addresses are available in the appendix.

Online Survey: Background

Survey participants were instructed to read background information

(<https://beta.portland.gov/bps/cleanenergy/news/2020/3/2/deadline-extended-seeking-public-comments-portland-clean-energy-fund>) on the PCEF program describing the program’s intent, the purpose of guiding principles, methods of sharing their opinion, how their input would be used, and the next opportunity to provide input.

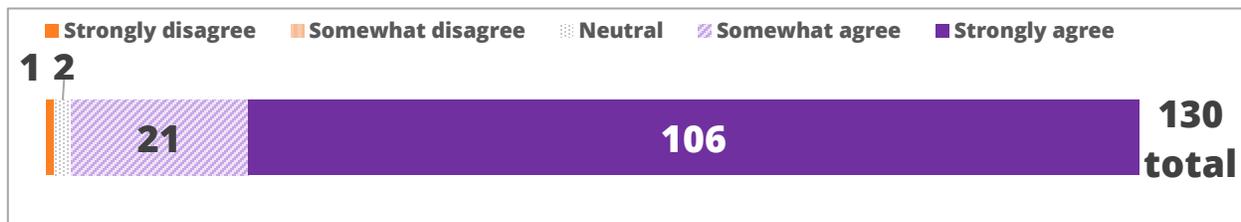
The survey began with optional questions about who survey participants represented including if they identified with priority populations identified in the ballot language and demographic questions. These questions were followed by questions on their level of agreement with each of the draft guiding principles and concluded with questions about their experience giving public comment.

Online Survey: Results on Guiding Principles

Survey participants were asked to rate their level of agreement for each guiding principle. For each survey result, there is a subset of data that is summarized from individuals and groups who self-identified with one of the priority populations identified in the City Code including low-income communities, communities of color, women, chronically underemployed, or persons with disabilities and consented to have their information summarized as such.

Justice-Driven. Promote systems change that addresses historic and current discrimination. Center all disadvantaged and marginalized groups – particularly Black and indigenous people.

Summary of all responses:



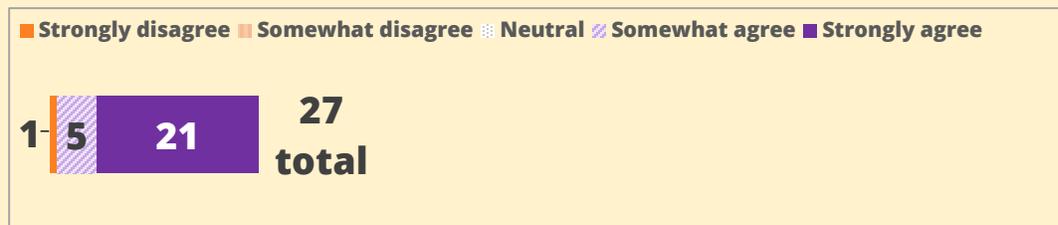
Summary of additional comments on Justice-Driven:

- Commenters had various opinions on the particular focus on Black and indigenous people:
 - Many commenters appreciated and approved of prioritizing Black and indigenous people and asked how this will be evaluated
 - A commenter appreciated the Black and indigenous focus wondered how PCEF would address anti-blackness and indigenous erasure in communities of color
 - Several commenters expressed that a focus on Black and indigenous people means a focus on buying land back for these communities and ensuring housing is a fundamental right on this land
 - Some commenters asked for a rationale on why Black and indigenous people are prioritized over other disadvantaged groups; several commenters wondered if other communities of color should be explicitly listed or expanded.

- A commenter encouraged explaining why you are prioritizing Black and indigenous people and defining what “indigenous” meant as it can also include Latinx communities depending on how it is defined
- Commenters had questions on how disadvantaged and marginalized groups were defined; a commenter expressed that justice should extend to most vulnerable particularly women of color and immigrants
- Commenters felt some of the language was confusing and offered some language:
 - “Center” was confusing, why not just say “focus”
 - “Address historic and current discrimination” would be better defined as a path to resolving or having restorative justice
- A commenter wanted this principle be more inclusive of all people that live in Portland
- Commenters expressed that socioeconomic discrimination and those who experience houselessness should be called out in this principle
- A commenter suggested that justice should include options for small organizations to compete for grant funding
- A commenter suggested that communities on the frontlines of environmental racism should have reparations

Summary of priority population responses

Note: This is a subset of data from all responses above in order to support further understanding of the perspectives of priority populations identified in the City Code including low-income communities, communities of color, women, chronically underemployed, or persons with disabilities.

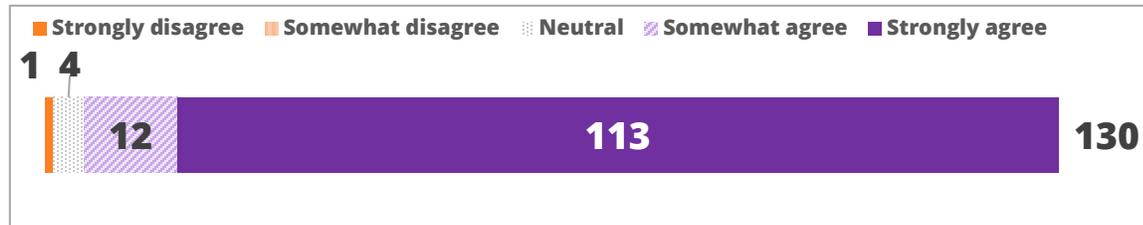


Summary of additional comments highlighted by priority populations:

- A commenter appreciated naming “particularly Black and indigenous people”, asked how PCEF will truly center these communities and complexity and diversity within them, and how anti-blackness and erasure of indigenous communities would be addressed.
- Some commenters suggested calling out BIPOC instead of just Black and indigenous people; another commenter noted that justice should extend to most vulnerable including women of color and immigrants.
- Many commenters approved of the focus on those who have been historically disadvantaged as systemic changes need to be in place to dismantle systems of oppression
- Commenters asked how marginalized and disadvantaged groups are defined and suggested going deeper into specific discriminations
- Commenters expressed what justice-driven looks like for them including:
 - Small organizations being able to compete for funding
 - Buying back land for Black and indigenous communities

Accountable. Implement a transparent funding and oversight process that promotes continuous learning and improvement. Demonstrate achievement of equitable social, economic, and environmental benefit. Remain accountable to target beneficiaries, grantees, and all Portlanders.

Summary of all responses:

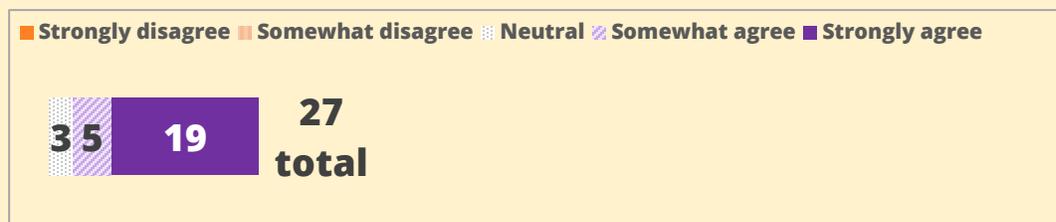


Summary of additional comments on Accountable:

- Some commenters offered improvements:
 - Add “leverage PCEF with other sources to increase impact”
 - “Promotes” continuous learning and improvement feels inefficient, suggests that this is built into the process
 - Stating that impacted community members be placed on oversight committees to hold implementation process accountable to its original intent
 - Need more clarity in who decides what success is and how
 - The process should be easily available to everyone and spelled out in this principle
- Many commenters were glad to see the focus on transparency and felt that PCEF should support frontline community-serving organizations that offer a vision and commitment to progress and grow with the program
- Commenters inquired or made suggestions on how this principle might be applied:
 - How will tension between economic and environmental benefits be weighed
 - A culturally specific lens should be used in metrics and methods of collecting data as there can be historically negative implications for certain groups
- Commenters defined what accountability could mean to them including resourcing grantees to provide multi-year contracts to provide opportunity for meaningful, visionary success as well as retain staff

Summary of priority population responses:

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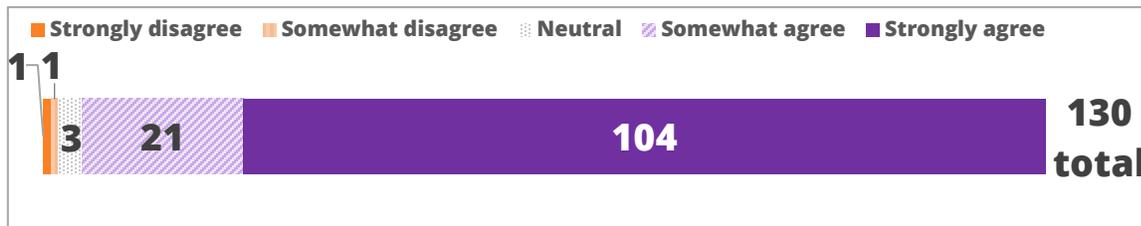


Summary of additional comments highlighted by priority populations:

- Commenters were glad to see accountability in usage of funds and added that organizations should be able to clearly demonstrate impact of use of funds
- Accountability should be extended to the communities that are being served
- A commenter felt this principle was to ensure trust among community of place and practice
- A commenter suggested that a culturally specific lens should be used in metrics and methods of collecting data as there can be historically negative implications for certain groups
- A commenter suggested this principle should state impacted community members be placed on oversight committees to hold implementation process accountable to its original intent

Community-powered. Trust community knowledge, experience, innovation, and leadership. Honor and build on existing work and partnerships. Engage with and fund in community-driven approaches that acknowledge and enhance community power to create meaningful change.

Summary of all responses:

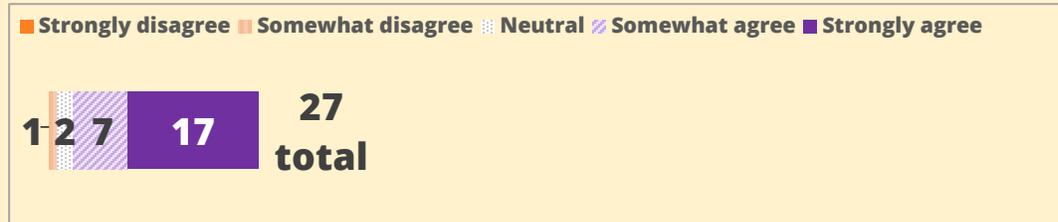


Summary of additional comments on Community-powered:

- Commenters expressed a lot of enthusiasm for this principle; many liked the focus on trusting community knowledge and experience and felt that engaging citizens would improve outcomes
- Commenters felt some of the language was confusing and/or may imply unintended meanings:
 - “Engage with and fund in community-driven approaches” not clear
 - “Honor and build on existing work and partnerships” might risk potentially protecting groups that may be dysfunctional; this could also state an intention of finding new community partners that are innovative, outside the box, and perhaps future integral partners to the climate movement
- Commenters suggested improvements:
 - State most marginalized communities will be centered through implementation
 - Explicitly acknowledge building capacity of community in addition to enhancing community power
- Commenters wrote in what “community-powered” could look like for them:
 - Allowing frontline community-serving organizations to propose multiple projects in a single application
 - Using local workers and local companies
 - Small nonprofit organizations receiving seed funding for pilot projects
 - Vetting and review of organizations in BIPOC communities
 - Spend in neighborhoods where most communities of color reside
 - Focus on giving people tools to liberate themselves instead of focusing on City or non-profits for support

Summary of priority population responses

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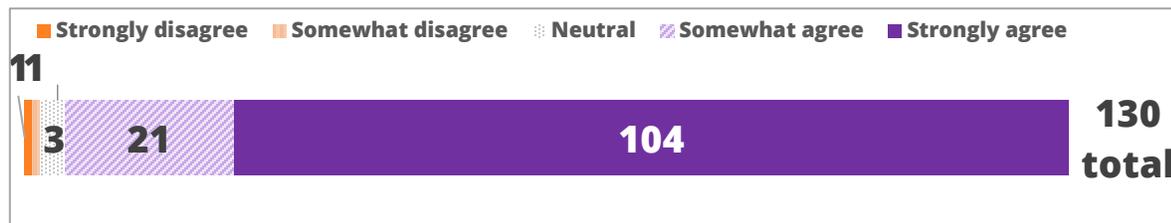


Summary of additional comments highlighted by priority populations:

- Many commenters supported and were enthusiastic about the focus on trusting community knowledge and experience
- Commenters wrote in what “community-powered” could look like for them:
 - Allowing frontline community serving organizations to propose multiple projects in a single application
 - Funding pilot projects to test ideas
 - Intentional inclusion, which requires creating space for opinions from everyone
 - Vetting and review of organizations in BIPOC communities
 - Focus on giving people tools to liberate themselves instead of focusing on City or non-profits for support
- Commenters offered improvements:
 - State most marginalized communities will be centered through implementation
 - Explicitly acknowledge building capacity of community in addition to enhancing community power

Focused on local co-benefits. Invest in people, places, and processes that build climate resilience and community wealth, foster healthy communities, and support regenerative systems. Avoid and mitigate displacement.

Summary of all responses:



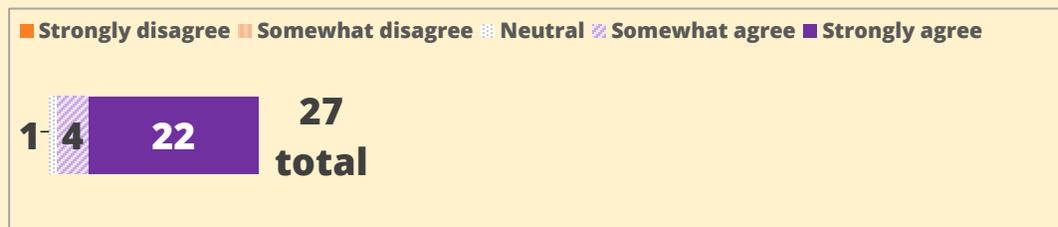
Summary of additional comments on Focused on Local Co-Benefits:

- Commenters offered improvements to this principle:
 - Explicitly talking about centering Oregon’s most marginalized communities

- Explicit language around living wages, promotion of community-based apprenticeship programs, union labor, and labor that is owned by people of color
- Many commenters were supportive of focusing on local co-benefits noting that climate resilience and health communities are valuable beyond measure. Additional comments supporting this principle included:
 - Particularly important given COVID-19 impacts and the need to build resilience and help fight displacement
 - Like that this acknowledges the numerous health benefits that come from a transition to clean energy
- Commenters offered what this principle might look like to them:
 - Making room for immigrants to be supported within the system to ensure they have access to wealth building tools
- Some commenters asked for clarification:
 - What do co-benefits mean, how does it relate to displacement
- A commenter noted carbon reduction should be the primary goal and benefits are worldwide
- A commenter noted that there are extractive, military, and corporate industries operating in Portland exacerbate climate change with their operations

Summary of priority population responses

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Summary of additional comments highlighted by priority populations:

- A commenter suggested explicitly talking about centering Oregon’s most marginalized communities
- Many commenters were supportive of focusing on local co-benefits noting that climate resilience and health communities are valuable beyond measure. Additional comments supporting this principle included:
 - Particularly important given COVID-19 impacts and the need to build resilience and help fight displacement
 - Like that this acknowledges the numerous health benefits that come from a transition to clean energy
- A commenter suggested that community wealth should make room for immigrants within the system to ensure they have access to wealth building tools
- Some commenters asked for clarification on what co-benefits means and how it relates to displacement
- A commenter noted that there are extractive, military, and corporate industries operating in Portland exacerbate climate change with their operations

Open-ended questions

Are there any principles that you would change or add to guide decision makers in achieving the intended outcomes of the PCEF program?

Commenter suggestions are summarized below:

- How PCEF can impact housing, transportation, and other sectors
- Emphasis on sparking sustainable innovation
- Include explicit language around climate including:
 - Quantifiably reducing CO2
 - Carbon reduction for all Portlanders
 - Goal of reducing carbon emissions – without this the program may open itself to future criticism
 - Amount of greenhouse gases reduced through energy efficiency or conversion should be an essential criterion to measure the success of any project
 - Overarching goal of reducing City's greenhouse gases
- Leveraging other resources to achieve maximum impact
- Recognize low-income people as a key intended beneficiary of PCEF
- Address needs of most vulnerable especially those in jails and prisons

Summary of priority population responses

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Summary of suggestions highlighted by priority populations:

- Make intersections of how PCEF will impact housing, transportation, etc. really clear
- State more clearly PCEF's intention to be part of narrative and systems change to shift historical imbalance
- State this is more than just the percent reduction of carbon per dollar spent – it is a way to tackle environmental, racial and economic justice issues

Additional comments

- Clarifying questions on Committee and how they will be held accountable and to whom; how to give public input and what these meetings will look like moving forward
- PCEF is important in the role it can play in economic recovery efforts given COVID-19. The hardest hit in COVID-19 are marginalized communities and climate change exacerbates inequities for these communities – programs mitigating these issues to reduce racial wealth gap should be given priority
- Get money out as quickly as possible with health and economic crisis now – PCEF is more important than ever
- Focus on worker and community-owned cooperatives instead of non-profits
- Grantmaking should allow for frontline community serving organizations to propose multiple projects in a single application

- Community groups should be allowed to propose more than one use of grant money
- Capacity building should be more than just workshops or training, there should be actual funding to support staff time and organizational costs
- Define “clean fuels” by excluding carbon fuels such as natural gas, renewable diesel, and power-to-gas

Emails

There were 81 emails received from individuals commenting on the PCEF Draft Guiding Principles and one email with a letter from the Portland Clean Energy Fund Coalition. These emails can be found in the appendix.

A summary of these comments are as follows:

- Portland Clean Energy Fund Coalition:
 - Given immediate health and economic crisis:
 - It’s more important than ever that PCEF is swiftly implemented and brings resources to underserved frontline communities such as low-income families and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)
 - PCEF will serve as an important community resource for economic recovery of low-income workers
 - Draft guiding principles are strongly aligned with values of the PCEF Coalition that organized to create this fund
 - Appreciate focus on justice and systems change; support focus on trusting community knowledge and self-determination
 - Feel a prioritization in buying land back for our communities specifically indigenous communities and ensuring housing is a fundamental right on these lands
- Individual emails
 - Justice-Driven:
 - Many commenters expressed appreciation for focus on justice and systems change for communities historically and currently experiencing discrimination particularly for BIPOC
 - One commenter expressed that this principle should extend beyond focusing on ethnicity and include low-income people of all background who have been impacted by environmental degradation in their communities
 - Accountability:
 - Many commenters were glad to see focus on transparency, demonstrated progress on social, economic, and environmental benefits, and accountability to fund’s intended beneficiaries
 - Many commenters added that grantmaking should support frontline community-serving organizations that offer a vision/commitment to progress and grow with the program
 - One commenter suggested that the reference to continuous learning and improvement is best connected with the second sentence rather than the first; first sentence should reference proactive avoidance of conflicts of interest
 - Community-powered:

- Many commenters expressed support for focus on trusting community knowledge and experience
- One commenter endorsed the focus on local democracy in PCEF decision-making, based in local community experience which is key to both justice and accountability
- Focused on local co-benefits:
 - Many commenters voiced support for climate resilience and healthy communities and principle focusing local co-benefits

Who we heard from (Online survey only)

Demographic Information

*If you are commenting as an individual, which of the following priority populations in the ballot measure do you identify with?**

Category	# Participants	Percent
Women	50	32%
Resident	54	35%
Low-income	19	12%
Communities of color	14	9%
Chronically Underemployed	4	3%
People with Disabilities	6	4%
Other	7	5%
TOTAL	154	

**Note: many respondents identified as commenting as an individual and on behalf of a group*

*Does your group serve any of the priority populations identified in the ballot measure?**

Category	# Participants	Percent
Women	23	21%
Resident	0	0%
Low-income	32	29%
Communities of color	30	27%
Chronically Underemployed	12	11%
People with Disabilities	14	13%
Other	0	0%
TOTAL	111	

**Note: many respondents identified as commenting as an individual and on behalf of a group*

Which best describes your group:

Category	# Participants	Percent
Nonprofit	35	67%
Business	4	8%
Government	2	4%
Resident	7	13%
Community group not registered as a nonprofit	3	6%
Other	1	2%

TOTAL	52
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Ethnicity/race (select all that apply)

Category	# Participants	Percent
<i>African / African Immigrant</i>	5	3%
<i>American Indian or Alaska Native</i>	7	4%
<i>Arab or Middle Eastern</i>	6	4%
<i>Asian</i>	8	5%
<i>Black or African American</i>	6	4%
<i>Latinx or Hispanic</i>	13	8%
<i>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</i>	1	1%
<i>White</i>	86	55%
<i>Other</i>	1	1%
<i>No answer</i>	23	15%
TOTAL	156	

Which best describes your household income?

Category	# Participants	Percent
<i>\$10,000 - \$14,999</i>	2	2%
<i>\$15,000 - \$24,999</i>	7	7%
<i>\$25,000 - \$34,999</i>	5	5%
<i>\$35,000 - \$49,999</i>	17	17%
<i>\$50,000 - \$74,999</i>	24	24%
<i>\$75,000 - \$99,999</i>	20	20%
<i>More than \$100,000</i>	27	26%
TOTAL	102	

What is your preferred language?

Category	# Participants	Percent
<i>English</i>	113	73%
<i>Spanish</i>	2	1%
<i>French</i>	1	1%
TOTAL	116	

What is your gender?

Category	# Participants	Percent
<i>Female</i>	61	57%
<i>Male</i>	46	43%
TOTAL	107	

What is your age?

Category	# Participants	Percent
<18	2	1%
18-29	18	8%
30-49	39	17%
50-64	21	9%
65+	35	15%
Total	115	50%
TOTAL	230	

Public Comment Experience

Did you feel comfortable giving this public comment?

Category	# Participants	Percent
Yes	109	84%
No	7	5%
Unsure	13	10%
TOTAL	129	

Do you think PCEF is a good opportunity for you and your community?

Category	# Participants	Percent
Yes	112	87%
No	2	2%
Unsure	15	12%
TOTAL	129	